violation of CTBT by the United States, by what is called the sub-critical N-test conducted recently; if so, the terms of their protest; and

(b) whether Government have also protested against the US sub-critical Test; if so, in what terms and the US reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir. China has noted that it is closely watching the US decision to conduct a series of underground tests. It also stressed that all countries should faithfully abide by stipulations in the nuclear test ban treaty.

(b)In a press statement on July 5, 1997, Government took note of the "sub-critical" test conducted by the United States on July 2, 1997 and expressed concern that the sub-critical nuclear test has been justified "as an activity permitted under the CTBT". India has been consistently pointing out that the CTBT in its present form contains loop-holes and without being placed in the context of a phased programme for global nuclear disarmament serves only a discriminatory non-proliferation intent rather than the urgent goal of global nuclear disarmament. The US Administration has not reached to India's statement.

Proposal to Accept LOC as International Boundary

2496. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal to accept LOC as International boundary along Pakistan India border on the North-West; and

(b) if so, its logic and justification?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Facilities to stranded Afghan Sikh Families

2497. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that about 200 Afghan Sikh families are stranded in Peshawar for the last three months, after fleeing from war-torn Afghanistan;

(b) if so, whether any facilities have been provided, on humanitarian grounds, to these stranded families by Indian High Commission in Pakistan;

(c) whether Government have initiated any action for their repatriation to India; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) to (d) Our High Commission in Islamabad is not aware of 200 Sikh families stranded in Peshawar, Pakistan. However, 205 Afghan Sikhs of whtch 175 are currently staying in Jalalabad, Afghhanistan and remaining in Pakistan requested for grant of visa to visit India. All these requests, barring eight which are still under process, have been cleared for issue of visa. 15 persons have have obtained their visas so far. The remaining 182 persons will be issued visas, on application, by the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.

श्रीलंका सरकार के व्यक्तियों द्वारा भारतीय नाविकों की हत्या किया जाना

2498. **श्री राघवजी** : क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि पिछले कुछ महीनों में श्रीलंका सरकार के व्यक्तियों द्वारा बहुत से भारतीय मछुआरे और नाविक मारे गए हैं ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो गत 1 अप्रैल, 1996 से ऐसे कितने लोग मारे गए हैं और कितने घायल हुए हैं; और